

Cubans Label Exiles' Navy School Here a Pirates Den

By DON BOHNING
Of Our Latin America Staff

The Castro press once referred to it as "an incubator of pirates."

To students and staff at the Pan American Merchant Marine Academy here the slur in the Cuban Communist publication "Bohemia" was a mark of distinction.

It shows, they say, that "our enemies recognize us."

The Academy, in an out-of-the-way spot adjacent to the Miami River, is the alma mater for 200 young Cuban exiles. It's here they learned the ropes of the sea-faring arts.

Some, it is said, were in the ranks of those who par-

School Founded By Dr. Hevia

SCHOOL officials neither confirm nor deny alumni participation in this or other exile activities.

"They discuss no plans here . . . neither what they have been connected with nor what they intend to do. We have no control over them as to what they do otherwise," said newly named Academy Director Manuel Aran.

Founded by one-time Cuban president, Dr. Carlos Hevia, nearly three years ago, the Academy's fate was uncertain when Dr. Hevia died early this month.

But its backers — mostly interested Miamians — indicated their continued support and Aran, longtime friend and associate of Dr. Hevia, was named director.

"We're established now and feel as though we're at the point where we can expand and do an even better job," said Miami Businessman Walter Ginn, Annapolis '23, and secretary-treasurer of the school.

Student Body Entirely Cuban

GINN SAID it is hoped that a memorial biography of Dr. Hevia will be published with any profits going to the school.

Ostensibly, the Academy was established to offer maritime training to youths from all Latin American countries.

Its student body so far has consisted entirely of Cubans and, as Ginn explains it, "the

immediate concern is to train Cubans and enable a group of 'sea-minded' ones to get together, to know each other and increase their skills."

"Now," adds Aran, "the Academy is good for the future of Cuba . . . later all of Latin America."

It's envisioned that one day

the students will be the leaders in a free Cuba maritime system.

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Work by Day, Class at Night

MEANWHILE, they are

anti-Communist exiles who hold a variety of jobs during the day and attend the tuition-free Academy classes four nights a week.

Instruction is in Spanish. The four instructors are all former Cuban naval officers and professors at the Cuban Naval Academy. They receive

no salary. The six-month course parallels that of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

The organization's charter says it is "non-political, non-profit and non-military." Its purpose, say Aran and Ginn, is only to teach the sea-faring arts.

How that knowledge is used, they say, is the concern of the students, not the Academy.

To qualify for admission the applicant must be 17 and have the equivalent of at least a high school education and preferably one year of college.

Currently a class of 17 is enrolled for the eight hours a week instruction.

The Academy has grown — physically at least — since it opened in 1961 in three second-floor rooms of a downtown office building.

It now has four first floor rooms ("two large and two

small") near the Seventh Ave. bridge. The space is donated by Miamian James Dickey.

Only outward sign of its existence is a sheet of letterhead stationery in the window and another in the door proclaiming the "Pan American Merchant Marine Academy."



Dr. Carlos Hevia
... academy founder

participated in hit-and-run raids on Cuba before the U.S. ordered a halt to such activities.

The raids prompted the "Bohemia" attack.

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